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The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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THE SPELL OF MERRY CHRISTMAS.

'Tis the time of year for the loving cup
To pass from hand to hand
When the sounds of wassail and revelry
Are echoing o'er the land;
For North, where the skater skims the mere,
And South, where the red-bird sings,
A pulse of cheer to the waning year
The Merry Christmas brings.

'Tis the time of year for the open hand
And the tender heart and true,
When a rift of heaven has cleft the skies
And the saints are looking through.
The flame leaps high where the hearth was drear,
And sorrowful eyes grow bright,
For a message dear that all may hear
Was borne on the Christmas light.

'Tis the time of year for the cordial word
And the grace of the lifted load,
For brother to come to brother's help
On the rough and stony road.
'Tis time to bury the ancient hate,
And to make the quarrels up;
No grudge has room where the roses bloom
Round the Christmas loving cup.

'Tis the time of year for children's joy
And all in a scarlet row
The stockings hang in the ingle nook
And the dreaming faces glow,
And the children turn and laugh in sleep,
To-morrow will be so gay;
For there never is mirth in this queer old earth
Like the mirth of Christmas Day.

'Tis the time of year for the sweet surprise,
For the blessing we did not see,
Though straight from the infinite love of God
'Twas coming to you and me.
'Tis the time for seeking once again
The sheen of the Bethlehem star
And for kneeling fain, with the age-long train,
Where the Babe and Mary are.

'Tis the time of year for the loving cup,
When the holly berries shine,
And with shout and song of man and maid
The cedar and fir we twine.
Ah! pass the cup from the frozen North
To the South where the robin sings,
For a pulse of cheer to the waning year
The merry Christmas brings.

—*Margaret E. Sangster.*

GENTILE PROPHECIES OF CHRIST.

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa, in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him."

Was the Messiah to be King of the Jews alone? No; he was for the world; he was the Good Shepherd of nations, and declared that he had "other sheep, not of this fold."

It seems to be most striking that in the poetical and beautiful account of the birth of Jesus there is record of two distinct classes who come to pay him homage,—not only the simple-minded and devout laboring people of the Jews, but also the learned sages of the Gentiles.

There are constant intimations throughout the Old Testament that God's choice of the Jews was no favoritism; that he had not forgotten other races, but that he chose Israel not to aggrandize one people, but to make that people his gift-bearers to the whole world.

The Babylonian captivity answered other purposes beside the punishment and restoration of the Jewish nation to the worship of the true God. It was a sort of prophetic "Epiphany," in which the Messianic aspirations of the Jews fell outside of their own nation, like sparks of fire on those longings which were common to the human race. Even the Jewish prophet spoke of the Messiah as "the Desire of all Nations."

And this desire and the hope of its fulfilment were burning fervently in the souls of all the best of the Gentile nations; for not among the Jews alone, but among all the main races and peoples of antiquity, have there been prophecies and traditions more or less clear of a Being who should redeem the race of man from the power of evil and bring in an era of peace and love.

The yearning, suffering heart of humanity formed to itself such a conception out of its own sense of need. Poor, helpless man felt himself an abandoned child, without a Father, in a scene of warring and contending forces. The mighty, mysterious, terrible God of nature was a being that he could not understand, felt unable to question. Job in his hour of anguish expressed the universal longing:—

"Oh that I knew where I might find him! I would come even to his seat, I would order my cause before him, I would fill my mouth with arguments. Would he plead against me with his great power? Nay, but he would put strength in me."

It was for this Mediator, both divine and human, who should interpret the silence of God to man, who should be his Word to his creatures, that all humanity was sighing. Therefore it was that the first vague promise was a seed of hope, not only in the Jewish race, but in all other nations of the earth.

One of the earliest and most beautiful prophecies of the coming Messiah is from the heathen astrologer, Balaam:—

"Balaam the son of Beor saith,
The man whose eyes are open, saith,
He which heard the word of God
And knew the knowledge of the Most High,
Which saw the vision of the Almighty
Falling into a trance and having his eyes open:
I shall see HIM, but not now.
I shall behold HIM, but not nigh.
There shall come a STAR out of Jacob,
A sceptre shall rise out of Israel.
Out of Jacob shall come HE that shall have dominion!"

Of late there has been discovered in Nineveh a large work on the system of magic of the Chaldee soothsayers, written on tiles of baked clay, in the "arrow-head" characters. Here we have a minute account of the Chaldeans,—the astrologers and the sorcerers spoken of in Daniel,—with specimens of their liturgic forms and invocations. M. Lenormant, who has issued a minute account of this work with translations of many parts of it, gives an interesting account of the religious ideas of the Chaldees in the very earliest period of antiquity, as old or older than that of the soothsayer Balaam.

He says the supreme divinity, whom they called Ea, was regarded as too remote and too vast to be approached by human prayer, and that he was to be known only through the medium of another divinity, his first-begotten Son, to whom is given a name signifying the Benefactor of Man.

The prayers and ascriptions to this divinity remind us of the Old Testament addresses to the Messiah. The Hebrew poet says,—

"Of old thou laid the foundations of the earth,
And the heavens are the work of thy hands."

The ancient invocation upon the tiles of Nineveh, addressed to the mediator, runs thus:—

"Great Lord of earth! King of all lands,
First-begotten Son of Ea,
Director of heaven and earth,
Most merciful among the gods,
Thou who restorest the dead to life."

. . . . . .

We see here the reflection of a Being such as the contemporaries of Abraham in the land of the Chaldees must have looked forward to,—an image of that diffused and general faith which pervaded the world in the days when the patriarch was called to be the Father of a peculiar people.

In the Zendavesta—begun about the age of Daniel—also are traces of the same Being, with prophecies of his future appearance on earth to restore the human race to peace and goodness.

About forty years before the birth of Christ Virgil wrote his beautiful Eclogue of Pollio. The birthplace of Virgil was near the town of Cumæ, where lived the Cumean Sibyl, and her traditionary history and her writings must have deeply impressed his mind. Possibly he only thought of them as a poet thinks of a fine theme for the display of poetic imagery; and possibly he may have meant to make of this eclogue a complimentary prophecy of some patron of his times. But, when we remember that it was published only about forty years before

the birth of Christ, and that no other historical character corresponding to this prediction ever appeared, it becomes, to say the least, a remarkable coincidence.

Not in Virgil alone, but scattered also here and there through all antiquity, do we find vague, half prophetic aspirations after the Divine Teacher who should interpret God to man, console under the sorrows of life, and charm away the fears of death. In the Phædo, when Socrates is comforting his sorrowful disciples in view of his approaching death, and setting before them the probabilities of a continued life beyond the grave, one of them tells him that they believe while they hear him, but, when he is gone, their doubts will all return, and says, "Where shall we find a charmer then to disperse our fears?" Socrates answers that such a Charmer will yet arise, and bids his disciples seek him in all lands of the earth. Greece, he says, is wide, and there are many foreign lands and even barbarous countries in which they should travel searching for Him, for there is nothing for which they could more reasonably spend time and money.

And in the discourse of Socrates with Alcibiades, as given by Plato, the great philosopher is represented as saying, "We must wait till One shall teach us our duty towards gods and men."

Alcibiades asks, "When, O Socrates, shall that time come, and who will be the Teacher? Most happy should I be to see this man, whoever he is." The sage replies: "He is One who is concerned for thee. He feels for thee an admirable regard."

When one reads these outreachings for an unknown Saviour in the noblest minds of antiquity, it gives pathos and suggestive power to that emotion which our Lord manifested only a few days before his death, when word was brought him that there were certain *Greeks* desiring to see him. When the message was brought to him, he answered with a burst of exultation: "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit; and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me!"

He was indeed the "Teacher" who had been "concerned" for Alcibiades, who had cared for Socrates. He was the "Charmer" whom Socrates bade his disciples seek above all things. He was the unknown bringer of good for whom Virgil longed. He was the "Star" of Balaam, the "Benefactor" of the Chaldee astrologers, the "Saviour" predicted by the Persian Zoroaster. He was, it is true, the Shepherd of Israel; but he had a heart for the "*other* sheep not of this fold," who were scattered through all nations of the earth. He belonged not to any nation, but to the world, and hence aptly and sublimely did the last prophecy proclaim, "The desire of all nations shall come!"—*Harriet Beecher Stowe, "Footsteps of the Master."*

THE STILL HOUR.

"'Mongst lowly men
Good will be spread abroad"—
Till Christ indeed
Shall come again
And every heart
With zealous speed
Acknowledge him its Lord.

Christmas-time is a time of gratitude, reminding us of our duty to praise God. The feeling of thankfulness, of gratitude, of loving desire to please those who have been kind toward us, have made some sacrifice to satisfy our needs or gratify our desires, is a most delightful one. So we should feel towards God. We should praise with our whole hearts. "Praise ye the Lord: 'tis good to raise your hearts and voices in his praise." Let the angels' song be our song, and "Glory to God in the highest" be the exultant strain that, welling up from grateful hearts, will join with the acclamations of the innumerable host of heaven and earth in praise of him who loves us so.

We love to think that, while we in earth proclaim our joy over the birth of Jesus, the angels that welcomed him to earth, over those old Judæan hills, lead the innumerable hosts of heaven in new songs of "Glory to God and good will to men," and that universal tribes, in all worlds of space, take up the same grateful refrain in notes of richest melody. And more, that the grateful celebrations we render, as we think of the mangered Christ, are to be forever continued both on the earth and in the heavens.

We say just now that everywhere in Christendom there is gladness in the air. In every house and street and place of concourse we hear the phrase, "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!" And it is a joy to us to mark this kindly expression among old and young and rich and poor. May this season, the closing of the year, always have its abundance of good will, of kind wishes. Yet it is a fact that in many a home the joy is tempered with sorrow.

There is the vacant chair, there is the silence of a voice once heard,—yes, in the house of the millionaire as in the house of poverty, and in the thousand homes neither rich nor poor, but all the poorer for some bereavement.

O Lord, there sit apart in lonely places,
On this the gladdest night of all the year,
Some stricken ones with sad and weary faces,
To whom the thought of Christmas brings no cheer!
For these, O Father, our petition hear,
Send Thou the lowly Christ-child very near!

Lord, there be toiling ones, on whom life's burden
Presses so ceaselessly, they have no time
To snatch for a brief hour rest's blessed guerdon,
Or swell by one faint note our Christmas chime!
For these, O Father, our petition hear,
And send the pitying Christ-child very near!

And there be tempted souls this night still waging
Such desperate warfare with all evil powers;
Anthems of peace, while the dread strife is raging,
Sound but as mockery through their midnight hours.
For these, O Father, our petition hear,
And send the tempted, sinless Christ-child near!

O Lord, some sit by lonely hearthstones sobbing,
Who feel this night all earthly love denied;
Who hear but dirges in the loud bell's throbbing,
For loved ones lost, who blessed last Christmastide.
For these, O Father, our petition hear,
And send the loving Christ-child very near.

For those who, from disease of body, languish,
For those who weep for children gone astray,
For those whose sore hearts hide in secret anguish
Some grief which shrinks from the clear light of day,—
For all who suffer, our petition hear,
And send Thou Christ, the Comforter, most near.

—*The Christian Life.*

THE OTHER WORLD.*

It lies around us like a cloud,
The world we do not see;
Yet the sweet closing of an eye
May bring us there to be.

Its gentle breezes fan our cheek
Amid our worldly cares;
Its gentle voices whisper love,
And mingle with our prayers.

Sweet hearts around us throb and beat,
Sweet helping hands are stirred,
And palpitates the veil between,
With breathings almost heard.

The silence, awful, sweet, and calm,
They have no power to break;
For mortal words are not for them
To utter or partake.

So thin, so soft, so sweet they glide,
So near to press they seem,
They lull us gently to our rest,
They melt into our dream.

And, in the hush of rest they bring,
'Tis easy now to see
How lovely and how sweet a pass
The hour of death may be,—

To close the eye and close the ear,
Wrapped in a trance of bliss,
And, gently drawn in loving arms,
To swoon from that to this,—

Scarce knowing if we wake or sleep,
Scarce asking where we are,
To feel all evil sink away,
All sorrow and all care!

Sweet souls around us, watch us still,
Press nearer to our side;
Into our thoughts, into our prayers,
With gentle helping glide.

Let death between us be as naught,
A dried and vanished stream;
Your joy be the reality,
Our suffering life the dream.

—*Harriet Beecher Stowe.*

This poem was printed in the *Cheerful Letter* several years ago, but it is reprinted by the special request of a friend.

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe Street, Quincy, Mass.*]

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking, "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

OFFERS.

The Cambridge Branch offers the following books. Address Miss M. A. Vinal, 20 Lowell Street, Cambridge, Mass.:—

For Children.

"De Robin"; "Stories of the Red Children"; "Nellie's Silver Mine," H. H.; "Joyous Story of Toto"; "Bairn Book of Days"; "Robinson Crusoe"; "Baily-Manly Spelling Book"; "Tales of Janey, Josey, and Joe"; "The Purple Parasol"; "Pansy, Story of a Cat"; "Mopsa, the Fairy"; "Book of Folk Stories"; "Little Men," Alcott; "Beginner's Reader"; "Little Colonel Stories"; "The House that Elsie built."

Miscellaneous.

"Life of William Lloyd Garrison"; "The Caravaners"; "Prisoners," Cholmondeley; "The Old Garden"; "In the Forest of Arden," H. W. Mabie; "Selections from Lowell," poetry and prose; "Auld Lang Syne and Other Songs"; "Frederick the Great and his Court"; "Chipping Borough," Weyman; "Little Foxes," H. B. Stowe; "Peter," F. Hopkinson Smith; "The Giant's Robe"; "Christmas Child"; "Life of Lord Clive"; "Amenities of the Home."

Mrs. Annie F. Hudson, 2 Maple Place, Jamaica Plain, Mass., offers to any one paying postage: *Current Literature* for 1910; *World's Work*, 1910; *Scientific American*, March to September, 1911; *Independent*, 1911.

REQUESTS.

1. I thank you all for the nice books and other reading matter I have received. I appreciated them very much, and would have thanked each one by card, but so many sent no name or address. I should feel very grateful if some one would send us two dictionaries, one Latin and one English. The children need them very badly in their school work, and our means are very limited. Mrs. Dora Bryant, Oakland City, Indiana.

2. I have never before asked for anything from the Book and Magazine Club, but I should like very much to have "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" and "The Greatest Thing in the World," by Drummond, and "Essentials and Non-Essentials in Religion," by James Freeman Clarke. The *Cheerful Letter* is sent me by a member of the Women's Alliance, also the *Christian Register*, and occasionally sermons and other Unitarian literature, for all of which I am very grateful. I am greatly indebted to members of the Women's Alliance of Waltham, Mass., for literature sent me for many years, which I pass on to others, where I think it will do the most good. My address is Mrs. Mary A. Wormell, Asotin, Wash. ("Essentials and Non-Essentials in Religion" has been sent.)

3. I am a shut-in and live in a community where reading is not plenty. I am eighty years old, crippled, and confined to a chair. I should enjoy reading Coleridge's Poems. The Cheerful Letter Exchange has sent me reading and cheering letters. The *Cheerful Letter* has cheered me and established my faith in God's goodness by the sermon it gives in each number. Mrs. Jane H. Annesley, Spearfish, South Dakota.

4. My address is changed from Saluda, North Carolina, to Springfield, Kentucky. I shall be glad of any reading matter sent me here. Mrs. Alice Whittle.

5. I refer you to Rev. T. S. Smith, Stoneville, North Carolina. I am teaching school, and we have no library; and, as I am very fond of reading, I shall appreciate anything that you will send. My address until March, 1912, is Miss Susie Grogan, Sandy Ridge, Stokes County, North Carolina. My home address is Price, Rockingham County, North Carolina.

6. I should like to receive some reading matter for myself and husband, magazines or good books of any kind. We get out very little and get very lonely. We have a small baby, and shall have to stay in all winter, so we shall appreciate something to read. Mrs. M. A. Town, Toronto, Woodson County, Kansas.

7. Miss Mary E. Decker, 338½ Commercial Street, Springfield, Missouri, will be very thankful for any reading.

8. Books and magazines will be a comfort to Mrs. E. H. Broaddus, Glen Allen, Virginia, whose health is delicate.

9. Will some *Cheerful Letter* reader please send me the books "Jo's Boys" and "Eight Cousins," by Louisa Alcott? I wish them for Christmas for my children. Any good books would be appreciated. Address Mrs. A. D. Thomas, R. 1, Box 60, Jackson's Gap, Alabama.

10. My aunt, Mrs. W. F. Galloway, told me to write and thank the ones who sent me mail. I certainly am glad to get the papers and books, but did not know who sent them. I pass them on to others, who enjoy them to the fullest extent. If you will send me the *Ladies' Home Journal*, I should appreciate it so much. Willie J. Ross, 292 North Church Street, Concord, North Carolina.

11. I am a little girl aged fourteen years. I have four sisters and three brothers, and live on a small farm out in the country, and have to work in the field very hard. Our free school lasts four months, and that is all we have the privilege of attending. Books are scarce with us, and I should like any kind of good reading suitable for girls and boys. I should be so glad of *Housewife* from January, 1911, to July, 1911. You can get reference from our minister, Rev. P. L. Terrel, Ansonville, North Carolina. Shall be glad to correspond with any one who would like to write me. Thanking you in advance, Mary Ida Hill, Ansonville, North Carolina.

12. I wish to thank you for all your kindness to me. My baby girl is just up from typhoid fever, which lasted two months. It has left her a cripple, I am afraid, for all time. I shall have my Christmas-tree as usual, and shall be so thankful for anything sent to help me out. This has been a hard year with us, and, if I have seemed unappreciative, I hope my friends will pardon me. I have had sickness in the house almost the entire year, and writing material and stamps were not to be had every time. Please do not forget us at Christmas. Mrs. J. Porter, Doerun, Colquitt County, Georgia, R. F. D. No. 3.

13. It has been a long time since I asked for any reading; but I do not have anything to read, only the dear little *Cheerful Letter*, which I receive once a month. It is a great help, but I should be very thankful for some other reading for myself and husband and story-books for the children. I should be very glad of a Bible. I thank you for all past kindness, and hope to be remembered in future with reading of any kind you can spare. Will gladly let others read it. Mrs. Joseph E. Broadaway, Polkton, R. F. D. No. 3, Box 30, North Carolina.

14. Miss Mabel Peake, Holladay, Virginia, is anxious to receive "Evangline," "Sesame and Lilies," "Hiawatha," and "Imitation of Christ."

15. A friend of mine has been telling me of your Cheerful Letter Club. I am very fond of reading, but I am a poor girl, and not able to buy books and magazines. My father is dead, and I have my mother and myself to support on a very small salary. I should be very glad if your members would send me something to read. Should be grateful for books, magazines, or anything of the kind. Miriam R. Beal, 111 Atlantic Avenue, Rocky Mountain, North Carolina.

16. Mrs. Ella McNanear, Park Rapids, Minnesota, feels the need of cheer more than ever, having been an invalid for the past six months.

17. Mrs. Hartley James, New Gloucester, Maine, wishes to extend her warm thanks to the friends who so kindly remembered her in her loneliness and grief. She would be very glad of any of Pansy's books, which she enjoys so much. ("Mrs. Deane's Way" has been sent.)

18. It has been some time since I have asked for any reading, but the evenings are so long and I am alone. I should feel grateful for any light reading. I should like the book called "Sidney" and any of 1911 *Youth's Companions*. Mrs. Lillie B. Davis, Box 104, Shiloh, New Jersey.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

OUR CHARLEY.

When the blaze of the wood fire flickers up and down in our snug evening parlor, there dances upon the wall a little shadow with a pug nose, a domestic household shadow—a busy shadow—a little restless specimen of perpetual motion, and the owner thereof is "*Our Charley.*"

Now, we should not write about him and his ways if he were strictly a peculiar and individual existence of our own home circle, but it is not so. "Our Charley" exists in a thousand, nay, a million families; he

has existed in millions in all time back; his name is variously rendered in all the tongues of the earth; nay, there are a thousand synonymes for him in English; for indisputably "our Willie," or "our Harry," or "our Georgie," belongs to the same snub-nosed, rosy-cheeked, restless shadow-maker. So in France he is "Leonce" or "Pierre," as well as "Charles"; in Italy he is "Carlino" or "Francisco"; in Germany, "Max" or "Wilhelm"; and in China he is little "Ling-Fung," with a long silk tail on the back of his head, but the same household sprite among them all. In short, we take "our Charley" in a generic sense, and we mean to treat of him as a miniature epitome of the grown man, enacting in a shadowy ballet by the fireside all that men act in earnestness in after-life. He is a looking-glass for grown people, in which they may see how certain things become them; in which they may sometimes even see streaks and gleamings of something wiser than all the harsh conflict of life teaches them.

"Our Charley" is generally considered by the world as an idle little dog, whose pursuits, being very inconsequent, may be put off or by for every and any body; but the world, as usual, is very much mistaken. No man is more pressed with business, and needs more prudence, energy, tact, and courage to carry out his schemes, in face of all the opposing circumstances that grown people constantly throw in his way.

Has he not ships to build and sail, and has he not vast engineerings to make ponds and docks in every puddle or brook, where they shall lie at anchor? Is not his pocket stuffed with material for sails and cordage? And yet, like a man of the world as he is, all this does not content him, but he must own railroad stock too. If he lives where a steam whistle has vibrated, it has awakened an unquiet yearning within him; and some day he harnesses all the chairs into a train, and makes a locomotive of your work table and steam whistle of himself. He inspects toy-shop windows, gets up flirtations with benevolent shop-men; and, when he gets his mouth close to papa's ear, reveals to him how Mr. So-and-So has a locomotive that will wind up and go alone,—so cheap, too, can't papa get it for him? And so papa (all papas do) goes soberly down and buys it, though he knows it will be broken in a week.

Then what raptures! The dear locomotive! The darling black chimney sleeps under his pillow that he may feel of it in the night, and be sure when he first wakes that the joy is not evaporated. He bores everybody to death with it as artlessly as grown people do with their hobbies, but at last the ardor runs out. His darling is found to have faults. He picks it to pieces to make it work better, finds too late that he can't put it together again, and so he casts it aside, and makes a locomotive out of a broken wheelbarrow and some barrel staves.

Do you, my brother, or grown-up sister, ever do any thing like this? Do your friendships and loves ever go the course of our Charley's toy? First, enthusiasm; second, satiety; third, discontent; then picking to pieces; then dropping and losing! How many idols are in your box of by-gone playthings? And may it not be as well to suggest to you, when you find flaws in your next one, to inquire, before you pick it to pieces, whether you can put it together again, or whether what you call defect is not a part of its nature? A tin locomotive won't draw a string of parlor chairs by any possible alteration, but it may be very pretty for all it was made for. Charley and you might both learn something from this.

Charley's business career, as we have before intimated, has its trials. It is hard for him to find time for it, so many impertinent interruptions. For instance, there are four hours of school, taken out of the best part of the day: four mortal hours, in which he might make ships, or build dams, or run railroad cars, he is obliged to leave all his affairs often in very precarious situations, and go through the useless ceremony of reading and spelling. When he comes home, the house-maid has swept his fore-mast into the fire, and mamma has put his top-sails into the rag bag, and all his affairs are in a desperate situation. Sometimes he gets terribly misanthropic; all grown people seem conspiring against him; he is called away from his serious avocations so often, and his attention distracted with such irrelevant matters, that he is indignant. He is rushing through the passage in hot haste, hands full of nails, strings, and twine, and Mary seizes him and wants to brush his hair; he is interrupted in a burst of enthusiasm, and told to wash his hands for dinner! or perhaps—a greater horror than all—company is expected, and he must put on a clean suit, just as he has made all the arrangements for a ship-launching down by the swamp. This dressing and washing he regards with unutterable contempt and disgust: secretly, too, he is sceptical about the advantages of going to school and learning to read. He believes, to be sure, when papa and mamma tell

him of unknown future advantages to come when he is a "great man"; but, then, the present he is sure of,—his ships and sloops, his bits of string and fish-hooks, and old corks, and broken railroad cars, and, above all, his new skates,—these are realities. And he knows also what Tom White and Bill Smith say. And so he walks by sight more than by faith.

Ah, the child is father of the man! When he gets older, he will have the great toys of which these are emblems; he will believe in what he sees and touches,—in house, land, railroad stock; he will believe in these earnestly and really, and in his eternal manhood nominally and partially. And, when his Father's messengers meet him, and face him about, and take him off his darling pursuits, and sweep his big ships into the fire, and crush his full-grown cars, then the grown man will complain and murmur, and wonder as the little man does now. The Father wants the future, the child the present, all through life, till death makes the child a man.

Though our Charley has his infirmities, he is a little bit of a Christian after all. Like you, brother, he has his good hours, when he sits calm, and is told of Jesus, and his cheeks glow, and his bosom heaves; and now he is sure he is going to be always good, he is never going to be naughty. He will stand still to have his hair combed; he will come the first time mother speaks; he will never speak a cross word to Katy; he repents of having tyrannized over grandmamma, and made poor mamma's head ache; and is quite sure that he has now got the victory over all sin. Like the Israelites by the Red Sea, he beholds his spiritual enemies dead on the seashore. But to-morrow, in one hour even, what becomes of his good resolutions? What becomes of yours on Monday?

With all "our Charley's" backslidings, he may teach us one thing which we have forgotten. When Jesus would teach his disciples what *faith* was, he took a child and set him in the midst of them. We do not presume that this child was one of those exceptional ones who have memoirs written, but a common average child, with its smiles and tears, its little naughtinesses and goodnesses; and its aptness as an example was not in virtue of an exceptional but universal quality. If you want to study faith, go to school to *your* "Charley." See his faith in you. Does he not believe that you have boundless wealth, boundless wisdom, infinite strength? Is he not certain of your love to that degree that he cannot be repelled from you? Does he hesitate to question you on anything celestial or terrestrial? Is not your word enough to outweigh that of the wisest of the earth? You might talk him out of the sight of his blue eyes, the hearing of his ears, so boundless is his faith in you. Even checks and frowns cannot make him doubt your love; and, though sometimes, when you cross him, the naughty murmuring spirit arises, yet in an hour it dissolves, and his little soul flows back, prattling and happy, into your bosom. Be only to God as he is to you, and the fireside shadow shall not have been by your hearth in vain.—*Harriet Beecher Stowe, "Our Charley, and What to do with Him."*

[The sequel, "What is to be done with Our Charley?" will be printed in the next number.]

THE BIRD OUR BROTHER: HIS USEFULNESS TO US.

II.

"Woodpeckers come in for plenty of abuse," says Mr. Praeger. "They are accused of injuring the bark of trees, stealing fruit, pecking apples. They do all peck wood, as their name implies, but with five of our species this is only to get at the injurious insects within, and they are thus conservers of forests and orchards. One species, however, the yellow-bellied woodpecker, or sapsucker, does eat largely of the soft, inner layer of bark, the cambium layer, and girdles trees to obtain the sap. Where the bird is abundant it can do real injury. . . . Besides cambium and sap, it preys largely on insects, and seems never to touch domestic fruit." The other woodpeckers are almost uniformly beneficial. Their field of labor is in the trees, and the service that birds perform in protecting woodland trees is more nearly indispensable to man than any other benefit they confer on him.

Moreover, the injury done by the sapsucker is greatly exaggerated, and indeed disputed by some observers. Otto Widmann, a trustworthy ornithologist, says that certain trees not only girdled, but in some places completely covered with holes, throve as if not hurt in the least by these perforations and the loss of sap. I have myself seen maple-trees with trunks for three or four feet completely covered with the perforations of the sapsucker, always, of course, a little distance apart, flourishing equally with others beside them which had not been touched;

also a shrub, I believe mountain-ash, with the stems almost completely girdled near the roots, still in perfect condition.

The motive of the bird in making these perforations is also seriously questioned. Many who have seen them at work, and watched them closely, testify that the exuding sap attracts many insects, on which the bird is seen to feed. It is a significant fact that when Mr. Bolles, wishing to prove that the sapsucker lives upon sap, fed some captive sapsuckers on that sort of food, they all died, thus proving to the unscientific mind that they could *not* live upon it.

The cuckoo, called also rain-crow and Indian hen, is, in spite of some superstition connected with him, and in spite of the misrepresentation of sensational writers, one of the most useful birds to us. One reason for the mystery attaching to this bird is his silent way of getting about, and his habit of keeping himself concealed. He does not fly about much when foraging, but simply passes from tree to tree, keeping well in towards the trunk, and slipping from branch to branch, more like a beast than a bird. But he devours immense numbers of hairy caterpillars, which are repulsive to most birds. In the Agricultural Department at Washington may be seen the stomach of a cuckoo so thickly set with the hairs of caterpillars it had eaten, that it looks like a piece of fine fur. In analyzing the contents of the stomachs, some cuckoos were found who had eaten more than one hundred tent-caterpillars, and one with two hundred and seventeen fall web-worms,—by actual count, —of course only one meal of each bird.

Each species of bird has his own place to fill, his part to perform in keeping down the armies of insects. One species clears the tree trunks, while his neighbor works under the bark. Another goes over the larger branches, and still another attends to the twigs and leaves. Some species put all their work upon shrubs. Many confine themselves to the surface of the earth, and among these, too, there is division of labor. Robins take care of the lawn, thrushes do the same kind of work in the wood, towhees search under bushes and weeds, meadowlarks keep the meadows clean, and the various species of native sparrows are everywhere at work on the ground. Swallows and flycatchers watch the air, and shore-birds keep our beaches clean. Hawks and owls relieve each other, day and night, in destruction of mice and moles and other small enemies, while buzzards and their kind perform valuable scavenger duty.

The list is endless; for, as I have said, each species has its own well-defined sphere of operations, and no one, that I have heard of, was ever known to shirk, to strike, or in any way to neglect its duty.

The kingbird is a little brother laboring under a load of slander. He is accused of eating bees, and hundreds of kingbirds have been shot to prove or disprove this charge. In all cases so far as I have been able to discover, the bees eaten have been found to be almost exclusively drones. Not that the bird is supposed to select in the interest of the bee-keeper, but for the very good reasons that the drones fly higher than the honey-bees, and are, therefore, more accessible to flycatchers, also that drones have no sting, and are distinguished by a white face, and so are easily recognizable to the sharp eyes of the birds.

Walter E. Bryant, a well-known writer, tells of an extensive bee-keeper in California, who, finding numbers of kingbirds darting about his trees, killed and dissected more than one hundred, and found them gorged with bees, but in no case was there one honey-bee. All were drones. This bird was, no doubt, the Arkansas kingbird, the California species, with habits about the same as the Eastern species.

In other cases kingbirds have been found who had eaten robber-flies, a pest known to have killed one hundred and forty honey-bees in a day. In addition the kingbird is an industrious hunter of insects known to be injurious. Among them are the gadfly, the clover-leaf weevil, the destructive rose-chafer, ants, and grasshoppers.

The common robin is another bird under the ban because of his fondness for fruit, but, as a result of the examination of many stomachs, this is the decision: when the snow is off the ground, the robin comes to the lawn, subsisting chiefly on fly larvæ; one hundred and seventy-five have been found in one stomach. As the season advances, they eat larvæ of many kinds, beetles, grasshoppers, and other ground insects. During March (these statistics, it should be stated, were compiled for Illinois) much of their food is cutworms; in April, beetles; but up to the end of May ninety-five per cent. of their food is insects. In June, July, and August they eat more fruit, but much of this is wild. Forty-one different kinds of wild berries have been found in the stomachs. On the whole Professor Forbes, summing up the evidence, says, "I, for my part, do not believe that the horticulturist can sell his small fruits anywhere in the ordinary markets of the world at so high a price as to the robin, provided he uses proper diligence that the

little huckster does not overreach him in the bargain."

The shrike, branded with the name butcher-bird, given him at first because he hangs his food as does a butcher his wares, but of late used as a term of vilification, suffers also under a load of prejudice, added to by many latter-day writers, who care far more for sensational statements than for the truth (as already noted). Besides the observations of unprejudiced and careful students, the testimony of the official investigations of the Agricultural Department, so often mentioned, is conclusive. It is summed up by the late Sylvester D. Judd: "The present investigation shows that beneficial birds form less than one-fourth of the food of the butcher-bird. It also shows that the butcher-bird, in addition to being an enemy of mice, is a potent check on the English sparrow and on several insect pests. One-fourth of its food is mice; another fourth, grasshoppers; a third fourth consists of native sparrows and predaceous beetles and spiders; while the remainder is made up of English sparrows and species of insects, most of which are noxious."

The celebrated Scotch naturalist, Thomas Edward, once found the mouth of a swift, that had been shot, full of gnats and flies she was taking to her nest. Many of them were alive, but they seemed to be held together by some glutinous fluid, probably the saliva. He took the mass home and examined it. There were fully one hundred gnats and flies in that one mouthful. From this, and observations of the frequency with which the old birds feed the young, he made careful calculations and came to the conclusion that, during the rearing of their usual two broods, one pair of swifts, in one season, would destroy the enormous number of nearly three hundred thousand of these pests of the air. This makes it nothing less than a crime to kill a swift.

The testimony in favor of that much maligned bird, the common crow, is so abundant that it cannot be repeated here. I will therefore give an impeachable verdict. An exhaustive study of the food habits of the common crow by the examination of over nine hundred stomachs is summed up in an official report of the Department of Agriculture at Washington in these words, "The facts, on the whole, overwhelmingly speak in favor of the crow."

I have offered but few of the immense number of statistics showing the value to us of the bird race. If a fuller appreciation of their services could bring about better relations, a surer protection, the benefit to us would be incalculable. If we could retain alive the millions that are sacrificed by nest-robbers, collectors, and gunners of all sorts, we should reap a substantial reward at once. No more would our grain fields be destroyed nor our fruit devastated in the bud; no more would our oak-trees be disfigured with dead branches in the midst of the green, nor our orchards be unsightly with the nests of caterpillars; no more would our city streets be foul with the crushed bodies of worms, nor our vegetables be black-hearted with the work of another pest.

Greater than this in importance is the benefit which would result to our boys by a training in humanity! No one in this enlightened day can doubt that such training is greatly to be desired, by just so much, indeed, as noble manhood is more to be desired than a state of brutal savagery. No one quality takes a youth so far on his way upward to the perfect manhood as humanity to those weaker than himself. The boy trained to be gentle to animals, to be reverent of all life, will never descend below the level of the brute, as many human beings do at present; no wife-beaters, no murderers will come from the ranks of the humanely taught boy. And this is not a mere opinion of mine. It is a fact obtained by a careful examination into the early training of criminals in many prisons.

I will close the subject with the words of an ornithologist whom I have quoted several times in this chapter, William E. Praeger, of Illinois:—

"I would be doing a great injustice to my subject were I to limit the beneficial influence of the birds to the field and garden. No common drudges are they, sullenly working for a daily wage, but they come brightly clad and with joyous voices to their appointed task. With man alone they share that wonderful power of song, their speed and grace of movement fill us with admiring envy, the exquisite colors and texture of their plumage are unequalled among created beings; they appeal to our best æsthetic sense. And in their lives we see beings gifted with a high order of intelligence, teaching us love, courage, constancy, maternal care, devotion to duty. There is not one of us but may learn a lesson from the birds. So when winter comes, and the crops are gathered in, and the little workers wing their way toward their Southern homes, let us bid them farewell, not only as good and faithful servants worthy of their hire, but as true and helpful friends, admired and loved, who have brought wealth, health, joy, and beauty into the lovely land of Illinois."—*"The Bird our Brother," by Olive Thorne Miller.*

THE FRIENDLY STARS.

DECEMBER: CASSIOPEIA.

Cassiopeia lies on the other side of the pole from Ursa Major and almost directly opposite the Dipper. Its chief naked-eye stars, seven in number, form a figure somewhat resembling a chair in shape. They are nearly as conspicuous among the circumpolar stars as the Dipper, and are about the same distance from the pole.

On account of the faintness of the little star on the front edge of the seat of the chair, some persons leave it out of consideration, and fancy the remaining stars outline a somewhat distorted "W." (None of the stars are of first magnitude, but three or four are second magnitude.)—*"The Friendly Stars," by Martha Evans Martin.*

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.

(*Concluded from last number.*)

Mrs. Stowe had expected that "Uncle Tom's Cabin" would please the South, but displease the Abolitionists. Her biographer says, referring to a somewhat earlier period:

"The attitude of Mrs. Stowe and her husband at this time towards the Abolition party was very similar to the position of thousands of thoughtful people to-day with regard to the Socialist party. While deploring its excesses and unwisdom in many particulars, they know it stands for great and radical reforms for which there is a crying need."

She had taken pains, as she thought, to be just and generous to the slaveholders, and to show that the fault lay with the system, not with individuals. Two of Uncle Tom's three masters were kind and humane men. But, as Garrison told her, all the defenders of slavery now stopped attacking him and devoted themselves to abusing her!

The war broke out, and her eldest surviving son went for a soldier. His parents and professors tried to persuade him to finish his medical course first, but the young man answered: "I should be ashamed to look my fellow-men in the face if I did not enlist. People shall never say, 'Harriet Beecher Stowe's son is a coward.'" He rose to be a captain, but came home a wreck in body and mind, destined to be a lifelong grief to his mother. When Mrs. Stowe met President Lincoln, he said, with a humorous twinkle, "So you're the little woman who wrote the book that made this great war!"

After "Uncle Tom" her works had an enormous sale, and she received large sums from her publishers; but money always slipped through her fingers. Her father, when the ladies of his church gave him $50 for a new overcoat, "ran around the corner and popped it all into a missionary collection"; and it is said that all the Beecher family acted on the principle of Henry Ward Beecher: "Money is like gunpowder. It's no use except you fire it off!" Professor and Mrs. Stowe were unstinted in their public and private charities, and they were also too trustful of others in their investments. Consequently, they were always in financial straits. Her thirty books and numberless magazine articles were all written under pressure, and she gave public readings from her works to help out the family income. On one of these reading tours, much fêted, she wrote to her husband:—

"Well, dear old man, I think lots of you, and only want to end all this in our quiet home, where we can sing, 'John Anderson, my Jo,' together."

Her biographer says:—

"It is little that she did not have money, or the faculty for getting and keeping it. She had wealth far more satisfactory and abiding: 'Sometimes in my sleep I have such nearness to the blessed, it is almost as if one voice after another whispers to me, "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder." "The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." . . . Depend upon it, the spirit of the Lord didn't pitch me into this seething caldron for nothing, and the Son of Man walketh with me in the fire.'"

There is no space to go into the details of her later life, her orange plantation in Florida, her big house in Hartford, Conn., that cost such sums to keep up.

"One day in a spasm of economy, Prof. Stowe attempted to mend personally a broken pane of glass in one of the cellar windows with a sheet of tin, two shingle nails, and a tack hammer. After breaking out all the remaining glass in the sash, he went to his room in an agony of despair, while Mrs. Stowe quietly sent for a glazier to attend to the matter properly. In all matters pertaining to literature and scholarship he was a ready help in every time of need, but the problem of taking care of a great house with extensive grounds on inadequate means kept him palpitating with anxiety and woe."

At last Prof. Stowe's health failed.

"From this time on Mrs. Stowe devoted herself to her husband, and refused to leave

his side. She had very exalted ideas of what a wife should be to an invalid husband, and her devotion knew no bounds. He loved her with all the intensity of his being, and with his increasing weakness clung to her with the pathetic helplessness of a little child. She went far beyond the limit of her physical strength in ministering to his needs, and probably in this way hastened the breaking down of her own constitution. For a long time she would not hear of having a nurse for him, and insisted on doing herself everything that his condition required, till at last compelled to yield him up to trained and skilful hands."

Toward the end of her life, Mrs. Stowe lost her memory and became like a little child. She was happy, lost in dreams, picking flowers and singing old familiar hymns. "I love to sing this hymn," she would say, "for, when I sing it, I think I hear my mother's voice!" Her great heart was more full of love than ever. The end was characteristic:—

"Waking at midnight, she said, 'Oh, I have had such a beautiful dream!' Then, as her faithful nurse gave her her medicine, she looked up into her face and said, 'I love you.' These were her last words on earth." *Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe, by her son and grandson.*

LESSONS FROM HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.

The celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of Harriet Beecher Stowe's birth has called attention anew to the work of this remarkable woman.

At the celebration of Mrs. Stowe's seventieth birthday, her son told Mr. Henry B. Blackwell that he wished the world could know how completely, in the eyes of her own family, the famous writer was overshadowed by the ideal wife and mother.

It is a fallacy that anything above the average added to a woman's brain means something subtracted from her heart. Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "Brain women charm us less than heart women, as red roses are more fragrant than white," or words to that effect, implying that in women heart and brains are somehow antagonistic. Olive Schreiner holds the contrary opinion. She says (referring to the love between man and woman) that a great nature draws and is drawn more powerfully than a small one. No general rule can be laid down. But Mrs. Stowe was a dazzling disproof of the delusion that in a woman unusual intellect must be accompanied by a cold heart. Her power of love was as far above the average as her power of thought. She loved intensely and tenaciously her parents, her brothers and her sisters, her husband, her seven children, and a large circle of friends. In addition, her big, warm heart overflowed toward all who were afflicted or oppressed.

She went about doing good. During her stay in Florida she was brought in contact with a man suffering agonies from rheumatism, very cross in his temper, and a bitter railer at Christianity. Mrs. Stowe dropped in upon him daily to tell him a bit of news or a funny story. She never mentioned religion, and, if he blazed away on the subject, she did not reply. At last, to the amazement of his family, he one day handed her a couple of $20 bills, saying: "I want you to let me have a little share in what you are doing in your church and Sunday-school, Mrs. Stowe. I don't make any professions of any kind, but I know a good thing when I see it!" Her biographer adds: "She was not surprised, because she believed in people. Just as the sun shines on the frozen ground, and says, 'You are not frozen ground, but a garden, soft and warm, and full of flowers,' and lo! it is so—so she kindled the best in people."

Her girlhood friends she loved for life. "The three words, 'God is love,' summed up her theology." She wrote, "Love after all is the life blood of existence, the all in all of mind." Her last words—spoken to her nurse when dying—were, "I love you!"

Another delusion is that in a woman large intelligence must mean stiffness and severity. Mrs. Stowe was full of fun. Her husband once brought home a dozen choice eggs for setting, but he did not mention his purpose, and the eggs were cooked and eaten, to his great wrath. "When he comes back to dinner, we will make him laugh and he'll get all over it," said Mrs. Stowe to the children. On returning from his lecture the professor found dinner smoking on the table, but no one in sight. A sound of cackling drew him to the woodshed, where he found his wife and children and the dog all perched on a beam, like hens, and the human members of the group cackling with all their might. His vexation passed off in a hearty laugh.

Another delusion is that women who can exert "indirect influence" do not care for the ballot. Mrs. Stowe exerted more than any woman of her time, yet she came to the belief in equal suffrage even earlier than her sister, Mrs. Isabella Beecher Hooker. Her father, her husband, and six of her brothers were ministers. Yet she did her preaching direct.

There are some striking analogies between the lives of Mrs. Stowe and Mrs. Josephine E. Butler,—the woman who did the most to abolish black slavery, and the one who led the fight against the white slave trade. Both had a fine heredity. Each was a member of a large family. Each was a character of rare sweetness and unselfishness, highly gifted, with the soul of a poet, and a keen appreciation of all the beauties of nature. Each was a woman of many sorrows, and each felt that her sorrows had helped to fit her for her life-work. The death of Mrs. Butler's little daughter gave her an undying sympathy for all unhappy young girls, and the crushing of Mrs. Stowe's heart by the death of her much loved son enabled her to realize the grief of slave mothers parted from their children, and to make the world realize it. Each was a woman of vivid and intense feelings, loving much. Each was handicapped by frail health and frequent illness. Each suffered acutely from the horror of the facts that she was forced to investigate. Mrs. Stowe wrote:—

"I suffer exquisitely in writing these things. It may be truly said, I write them with my heart's blood. Many times in writing 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' I thought my health would fail utterly; but I prayed earnestly that God would help me till I got through."

Each of these women championed an unpopular cause, and had to undergo persecution and obloquy; each had a noble husband who stood by her through everything; and each at last had to nurse her husband down to the gates of death, through a lingering illness in which he became as dependent on her as a child. Both women were upheld by a fervent and unshaken religious faith, which gave calm at the heart even in the midst of the whirlwind. Mrs. Stowe wrote: "He knows if it is best for us, and His blessing addeth no sorrow therewith. I cannot describe to you the constant undercurrent of love and joy and peace ever flowing through my soul." In each of these great women the grand maternal instinct not only embraced her own children with warm and bounteous fulness, but reached out wider and took in all who were wronged, making a frail and tender woman as formidable to the oppressor as a lioness defending her young.

Mrs. Stowe did her literary work when she was utterly exhausted and constantly interrupted. As her biographer truly says, authorship in such conditions would have been impossible to almost any one else. Shakespeare would hardly have attempted it. If, even under such handicaps, her writings moved the world, what might she not have done if her genius had had a fair chance? And what may not some other woman do when society has evolved more rational ways of getting the housework done, and has learned the folly of imposing a condition of chronically exhausted vitality upon mothers, whether they happen to be geniuses or not? It was not the essential duties of wifehood and motherhood that were Mrs. Stowe's chief handicap, but the necessity at the same time to "serve pots and kettles."

In "The Scottish Chiefs," when Wallace has taken a fortress and is about to march on farther, one of his men urges him to leave behind, to cheer the wounded, the sword with which he won Dunbarton. "I will hang it upon the wall," says this ardent Scot, "and the wounds of a true soldier will heal only by looking upon it." Let us hang up on memory's wall Mrs. Stowe's great achievement under her almost insuperable difficulties, and a glance at it will heal the wounds made in over-sensitive minds by these shallow slurs upon womankind.

Under all Mrs. Stowe's trials, cheerfulness and faith were the atmosphere of her life. In the little speech that she made at the celebration of her seventieth birthday, she told how unlikely it seemed, a very few years before the Emancipation Proclamation, that any one then alive would see the end of human slavery. She added,—the present writer was privileged to hear her speak the words, and has thought of them a thousand times since,—"Remember, everything that ought to be done can be done!" Her whole life re-enforces that great lesson of faith and courage.—*Alice Stone Blackwell, in the Woman's Journal.*

CHRISTMAS POEMS.

"AND THERE WERE SHEPHERDS."

Over the long green downs, when I do wander
After the ewes and lambs, so oft I ponder,
When the Chief Shepherd comes, that is full tender,
He will, of all His own, true reckoning render;
Them that give suck and feed, them from dust raisèd;
Praise the good Lord, therefòre.
The Lord be praisèd.

When 'tis a darksome night, and deep snow drifteth,
When many lambs are lost ere the storm lifteth,
I think, "When Thou shalt come, though the dark blind me,
Lord, 'twill be light to Thee, straight Thou wilt find me;

I, when Thou call'st my soul, with light amazèd
Shall in Thy light see light."
The Lord be praisèd.

Oft as the day comes round, this drear December,
How shepherds sat of old, still I remember,
And Thou didst send them news, straight from Thy city,
All of Thy great good will and Thy dear pity;
Glad were the shepherds then with glory dazèd;
Praise the good Lord, therefòre.
The Lord be praisèd.

—*Jean Ingelow, Holy Songs.*

OH, LOVELY VOICES OF THE SKY!

O lovely voices of the sky,
Which hymned the Saviour's birth,
Are ye not singing still on high,
Ye that sang "peace on earth"?
To us yet speak the strains
Wherewith, in time gone by,
Ye blessed the Syrian swains,
O voices of the sky!

O clear and shining light, whose beams
That hour heaven's glory shed
Around the palms and o'er the streams
And on the shepherd's head!
Be near through life and death,
As in that holiest night
Of hope and joy and faith,
O clear and shining light!

O star which led to him whose love
Brought down man's ransom free!
Where art thou? 'mid the host above
May we still gaze on thee?
In heaven thou art not set,
Thy rays earth may not dim:
Send them to guide us yet,
O star which led to him!

—*Mrs. Hemans.*

"O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM!"

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light!
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee to-night.

For Christ is born of Mary,
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given:
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him still,
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy child of Bethlehem,
Descend on us, we pray,
Cast out our sin and enter in,
Be born in us to-day!
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
Oh, come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord, Emmanuel!

—*Phillips Brooks.*

CHRISTMAS.

Christ's birthday! soft come floating down,
The manger songs from bygone years,
Till earth's white robe new glory wears,
And brightly in her shining crown
Each lonely star a guide appears.

The manger songs! Oh, sweet the lays
Each mother's loving lips have sung
'Neath cottage roof and palace dome!
Like warbling birds in spring's first days,
Back to the aged heart they come.

And softly on the listening ear
Do angel voices carol still,
"Peace on the earth, good will to men,"
As on the wild Judæan hill;
And waiting spirits breathe, "Amen."

Our birthday! if we wake to life,
The life that ever moveth on,
That knows no change of time or death,
But like a calm stream, 'mid earth's strife,
Mirrors the heavens it looks upon.

—*Lydia Very.*

PEACE ON EARTH.

Peace, peace on earth! the heart of man forever
Through all these weary strifes foretells the day;
Blessed be God, the hope forsakes him never,
That war shall end and swords be sheathed for aye.

Peace, peace on earth! for men shall love each other,
Hosts shall go forth to bless and not destroy;
For man shall see in every man a brother,
And peace on earth fulfil the angels' joy.

—*S. Longfellow.*

These Christmas poems have been printed in the *Cheerful Letter* before, but not for some years.

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Address everything relating to the Amusement Column to Mr. Henry A. Jenks, Canton Corner, Mass. Contributors are requested to write on one side of the paper only. Write name and address plainly (not necessarily for publication), and send the answers to the puzzles on a separate slip of paper.]

I.

CHRISTMAS DINNER.

1. A country of Europe. 2. An old sailor. 3. A harbor. 4. A caged bird. 5. From Catalonia. 6. One who exists. 7. What soldiers always are. 8. What a brave man never does. 9. Part of a ship and half of a great emperor. 10. I was in the ark. 11. A crow's song, a lie, and a beautiful object. 12. A pudding and what every house contains. 13. An old fashion and to overload. 14. A term of endearment. 15. An animal and its color. 16. A letter and an ornament of dress. 17. Part of a bell. 18. A mother in toto. 19. One of mankind's chief ornaments. 20. Three-quarters of a word signifying rapidity. 21. Satanic shell fish. 22. An island in the Atlantic. 23. 'Twas in Benjamin's sack. 24. A London paper. 25. Types mingled. 26. What the winner does. 27. Part of a horse. 28. An industrious creature and a letter. 29. A boy's name, a vowel, and a piece of butter. 30. A warlike implement. 31. An extra bone. 32. A province of France. 33. A parent cuts. 34. A woman's name. 35. An ailment. 36. A river in Europe, to make a kind of trimming, and an interjection. 37. A girl's name and a letter. 38. He wastes his time. 39. An employment of the past and what German might say to it. 40. A domestic animal and eternities. 41. One of the letters we are told to mind. 42. A wise tool. 43. High times. 44. Animals who have become dudes. 45. A charming essayist. 46. A kind of carriage and something to be respected. 47. Omit a letter and you have all the country people of Europe. 48. Antics. 49. A noted dog and what he did. 50. Pluck a flower. 51. A portion and high lands. 52. Domestic animals aloft. 53. A letter dances. 54. From Wielitska. 55. Fictitious distress. 56. 'Twas one of my ancestors, perhaps, who saved Rome. 57. A laborer. 58. Chloride of sodium. 59. A ram. 60. A tardy letter. 61. An acrobat. 62. A well-read letter. 63. A siesta and a relative. 64. I make a loud noise. 65. 'Tis not worth mentioning. 66. A foolish little boy. 67. Scourges. 68. The emblem of peace. 69. Children's delight and elders' horror. 70. Chronology. 71. A letter and ancient ballads. 72. I entreat you to travel. 73. Couples. 74. The bane of our first parents. 75. A kind of shot. 76. A curse and a woman's name. 77. Four-fifths of a month and a little house. 78. What soldiers sometimes do.

—*Selected.*

II.

BURIED NAMES.

Twenty-four buried Mythological Names.

Little Flo Raymond gave a party and asked all the children, even us who were older. Margaret, whom we call Peg, as usual, had a chill especially for the occasion, and mother blamed us a great deal for it.

At last we arrived, and, amid as lovely a grove as you ever saw, Flo received her guests. Violins made rare music, and flowers were in blossom.

When refreshments were served and Clumsy Ben dropped his cup, I dared not look up; but Grace restored it to him, and said, "Ben, I obey the Golden Rule." Dorcas tore her dress, which had on isinglass spangles, and was very pretty.

"Do we need a pan, Dora?" asked Flo, as we started the games. "Yes," said I, "an apple-pie pan."

Flo's papa risked his big ring as a forfeit, and said, "I risk all I have." He chose Grace to race with him, and she beat him, but he said it was only half a test, because he let her start so long before he did.

About six o'clock mother sent Tom as her messenger to bring us home. He rode down on the car, but we all walked back together.

—*Youth's Companion.*

Answers to puzzle in the November number.

THANKSGIVING DINNER.—Raw oysters, salted wafers, mock-turtle, crackers, cream cod, sandwiches, roast turkey with chestnut stuffing, spare-rib with apple-sauce, mashed potatoes, cabbage, peas, beets, onions, frozen sherbet, olives, pickles, bread and butter, quail, lettuce, salad, pumpkin pie, cheese, suet pudding, hard sauce, Neapolitan ice-cream, lady's fingers, kisses, grapes, dates, nuts, "raisins," coffee.

We see that Jesus has just what we long for,—a living, ever-present consciousness of God. We see that sense of divine companionship enveloping his whole life, and vitalizing every part of it.—*Scougal.*

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

Any minister (of any sect) who receives this paper is cordially invited to distribute the copies of the *Cheerful Letter* received among lonely members of his parish, shut-ins or invalids of whom he may know. He is also invited to write to our headquarters (see address on this page) and give names and addresses of those who may be cheered and helped by becoming our correspondents.

No *theology* is disseminated in our paper. All the religious matter is intended merely to strengthen, cheer, and comfort those in need of such practical help.

Givers of books are reminded that only books of an instructive or wholesome nature should be offered in the Book Club. Classics, educational works, and standard novels are always acceptable.

HEREAFTER, ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS, INTENDED FOR THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, "CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, 25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON, MASS." THIS INCLUDES SUBSCRIPTIONS, CHANGES OF ADDRESS, REQUESTS FOR DISCONTINUANCE, BEGGING LETTERS RECEIVED BY MEMBERS OR BRANCHES.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

The regular monthly meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange will be held Friday, December 1, at 10.30 A.M. at 25 Beacon Street, Boston. All interested are cordially invited to be present.

The chairman is at the Alliance headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, every Monday and Thursday from 10 to 12 o'clock.

LIBRARY NOTICE.

The Cheerful Letter Exchange offers to start a circulating library in any small community needing one, providing proper location and care can be furnished and satisfactory references supplied.

Apply to Mrs. Irene C. Rees, 51 Orchard Street, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

The Home Study Work of the Cheerful Letter Exchange offers to help those who wish to improve their education. Lessons will be given in all subjects which can be taught by correspondence, such as Arithmetic, Book-keeping, Algebra, all branches of English, History, Botany, Geography, Languages, Drawing, etc.

Requests for these lessons should be sent to Mrs. Annie F. Hudson, 2 Maple Place, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is a rule of the Cheerful Letter Exchange that no one may ask for money, clothing, or other articles, except books and magazines.

The name of any person who fails to obey this rule will be dropped from our list. Any worker receiving such a request should send the letter at once to headquarters.

Send requests for books and letters of thanks to the Book Club Secretary.

Please make checks payable to the Cheerful Letter Exchange.

Chairman, Miss Helen L. Bayley, 399 Broadway, Cambridge, Mass.

Editor of "The Cheerful Letter," Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

Book Club Secretary, Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe Street, Quincy, Mass.